

2016-2017 CURRICULUM UPDATE

Welcome back! Many of you may not be aware that the summer is a very busy time in School District 103! There are a number of new curriculum initiatives underway that will bring advancements in learning to our students. Programs in our major areas of focus that will benefit students during the 2016-2017 school year are summarized below. We look forward to another great year of teaching and learning in District 103!

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Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

In the spring of 2014, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) officially adopted The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) with a target implementation date of the 2016-2017 school year. The NGSS identify science and engineering practices and content that all K-12 students should master in order to prepare for success in college and 21st century careers. The NGSS allow students to think of science learning not as memorization of disconnected facts, but as a holistic understanding of integrated and interrelated concepts. This is one of the biggest shifts in the NGSS compared to previous sets of science standards. The NGSS require students to provide evidence of their learning with the goal to equip students with the critical thinking and analytical skills they need to be successful in college and to compete for today's most rewarding jobs. The NGSS connect scientific principles to real-world situations, allowing for more engaging and relevant instruction that clearly covers complicated topics.

In response to the new ISBE mandate, our 6th-8th grade science teachers immediately began working with 6th-12th grade science teachers throughout the District 125 (Stevenson) Consortium to align the science curriculum to NGSS. In 6th-8th grades the new NGSS-aligned science units were implemented during the 2015-2016 school year. Also during the 2015-2016 school year, our teachers in grades K-5 implemented one new NGSS-aligned unit of study. This summer our K-5 teachers and 6-8 science teachers continued this great work and have now accomplished the goal of completing the alignment of our science curriculum to NGSS for a full implementation during the 2016-2017 school year.

Social Studies

In May 2015, ISBE adopted the New Illinois Social Studies Standards. These standards are an adapted version of the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) standards. The vision of the New Illinois Social Studies Standards is for all Illinois graduates to be civically engaged, socially responsible, culturally aware and financially literate. Throughout the standards students are asked to demonstrate self, local, national and global awareness, critically analyze and evaluate information, be civically responsible and environmentally, geographically and historically literate.



During the 2015-2016 school year the K-8 social studies committee spent time gaining an understanding of the new standards and the implications to our current social studies curriculum and instructional approach. Social studies teachers in grades 6-8 began to develop units of study with other middle schools within the Stevenson Consortium and created an implementation plan. The new units will be implemented in all grade levels during the 2017-2018 school year.

1:1 Teaching & Learning Initiative

This spring, the Board of Education approved an expansion of the 1:1 Teaching and Learning Initiative. In the 2016-2017 school year, grades 1-8 will have full implementation. The expansion of this initiative is an important step to ensuring District 103 students are experiencing the high quality education they need to be successful in our ever changing, digital society.

As we piloted and completed Phases I & II of implementation, our experiences have proven that the 1:1 Teaching and Learning Initiative provides our teachers and students with enhanced learning experiences through increased student collaboration, creativity, and communication. For additional information on the 1:1 Teaching and Learning Initiative, please visit the 1:1 Teaching and Learning webpage at d103.org. You can also access the webpage directly at www.d103.org/11teachingandlearning.

English Language Learner (ELL) Cohorts

During the 2015-2016 school year, the district received a grant from ISBE to provide coursework leading to teachers obtaining an English Language Learner endorsement. The benefit of the strategies learned in the coursework extend beyond the needs of our EL learners and increase the engagement and content understanding for all students. At the end of the cohort eleven teachers from District 103 across various grades and content areas will have obtained their ELL endorsement; and during the 2016-2017 school year, the district will again partner with a local university and continue to offer similar coursework.

Fine Arts

In June 2016, ISBE approved new Illinois Arts Learning Standards. These new standards reflect best practices and identify what is important for students to know and be able to do in dance, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts. The arts are critically important in the process of preparing students for the critical thinking demands they will face in high school and beyond. Students explore a variety of symbolic codes and mediums, synthesize knowledge from subject areas as diverse as mathematics and social science, and devise innovative solutions to problems. They access new ways of thinking and learn to consider, evaluate, and value multiple viewpoints.

The district's fine and creative arts teachers will begin the process of aligning the district curriculum with these new standards. This work will be completed in collaboration with the other Stevenson Consortium districts and will be implemented by fall, 2018.

Resources

You can locate additional resources, including parent curriculum guides, via our webpage at www.d103.org/curriculum.

